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Ain't I a Woman!

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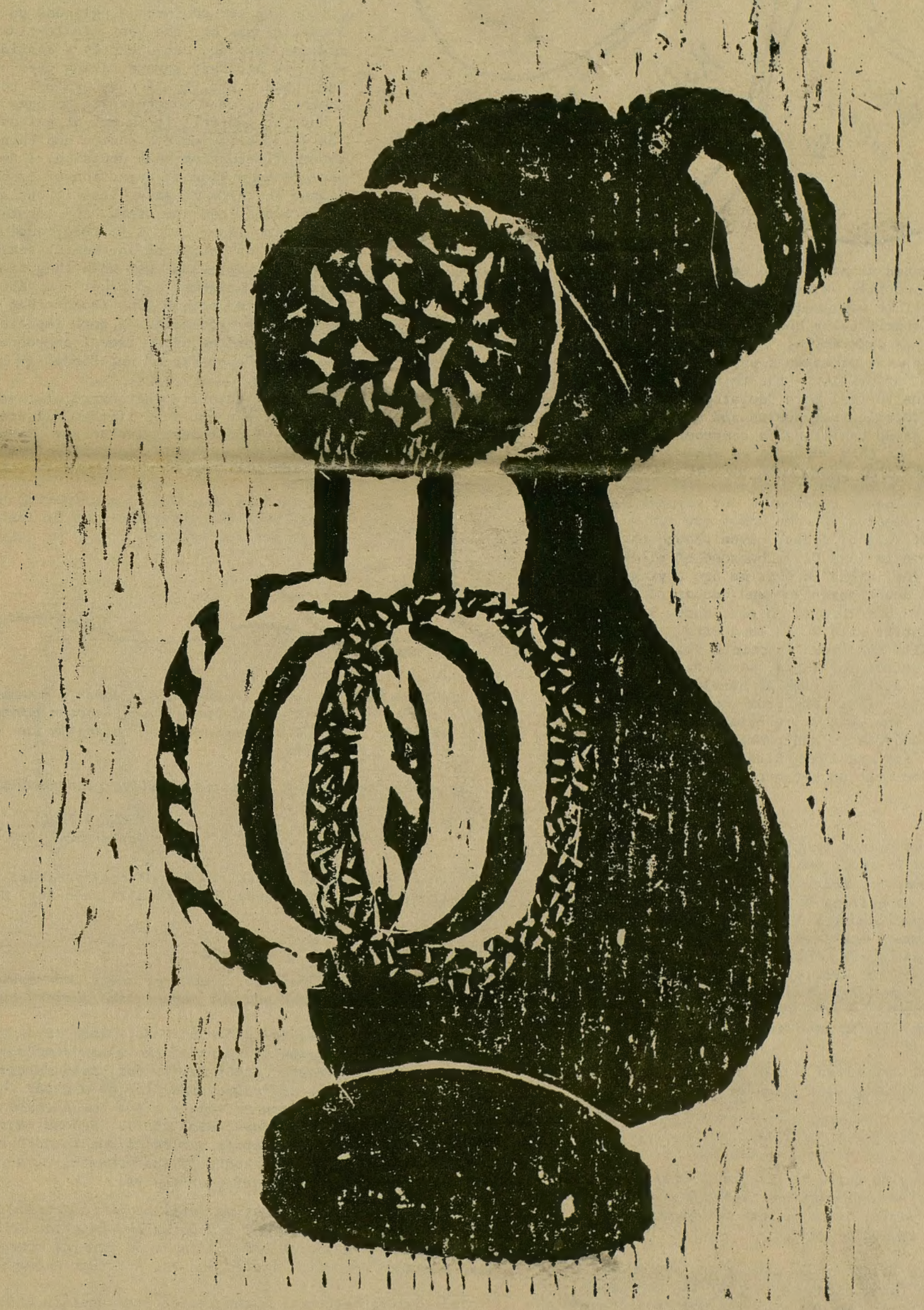

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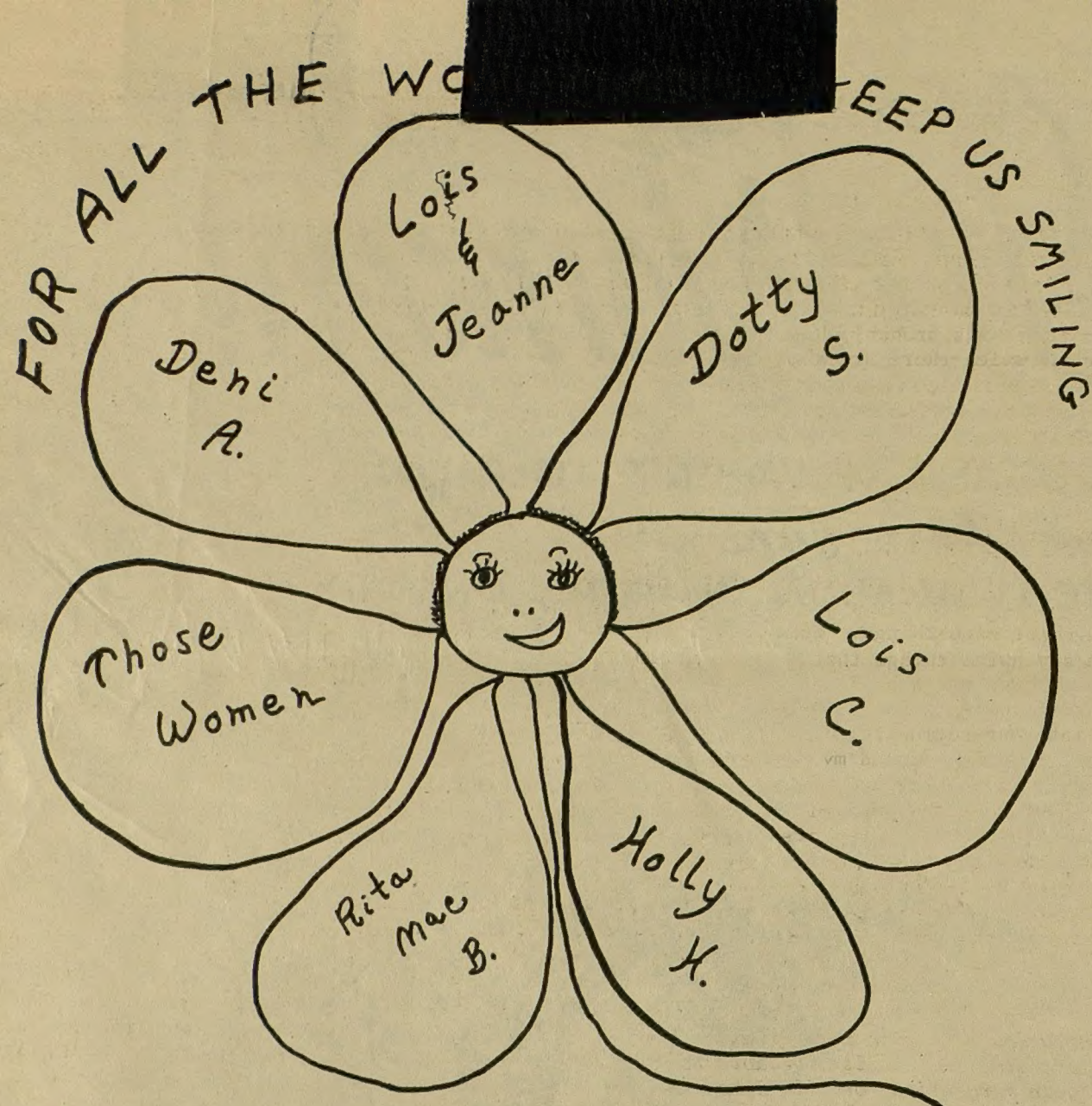


Two issues ago we reprinted an article we really liked by Rita Mae Brown. Along with the article we ran our own comment because, although we thought the article was exceptionally good, we felt in discussing women's media (specifically how most of it did not deal with lesbianism) that she had ignored us. As we have grown closer and come further in our analysis of women's oppression - as we have come to better see our priorities - the things that are important to us, we have begun to feel more isolated - to feel the tenseness of political differences between us and other women - to feel like such a small group unwilling to compromise on some of the issues close to us. At this point we're almost doing a balancing act between being woman identified and yet critical of the women's movement on its racism and its class antagonism. It's a balance we want for we can never compromise our gayness to make ourselves less offensive to some women nor can we remain silent and uncritical about race or class. Even though there is a growing community of women in Iowa City, because of all kinds of differences, we sometimes feel alone in what we are trying to do. We begin to get scared and doubt ourselves and our direction, especially when there are such divisions on gay, race, or class lines among women who identify with WL in Iowa City.

Since that issue with Rita Mae Brown's article things have been particularly heavy for us because of those issues and our disagreements with women here. But during a time of heaviness for all of us we have been getting a lot of letters from women and groups that do identify with us and the analysis we're attempting. It's a high and gives us a feeling of solidarity and community with groups of women around the country. For one thing Rita Mae Brown wrote us a letter in response to our comment on her article.

Dear Sisters:

Thank you for reprinting "Hanoi to Hoboken." I was really surprised when I discovered it and I was even more surprised when I read your note/criticism. Thank you most of all for that. You are right about us getting bogged down in our locality (especially East Coast people) and one of the reasons that happens is because the movement has a scant communication network. Another reason is, of course, East Coast chauvinism. I really want you to know that I do know of your paper and I think it is great. It is more woman-identified than any other and it seems to be slowly moving toward a coherent politics while the others are a collage of conflicting politics. I should have mentioned that in my article.

And one day feeling down and wiped out JD and Pat went to the Post Office to find the following from a collective of gay women in D.C.

Dearest Gay Sisters:

Well, we've been meaning to write to you for a long time. Your paper is FAR OUT - we read it alot and identify with so much you are going through and saying about us and the Movement - where we are and where we should be going.

Perhaps we should say a little about who we are - a collective of ll women and 3 children functioning as part of the worldwide conspiracy of Radical Lesbians. We are - at the moment - located in two houses in Washington. We are working on a women's skills center, a women's radio show, a women's studies curriculum for high schools, and alot of assorted other things. Our consciousness raising is centered on the question of class. None of this gives a feeling for the group so I hope to write in more detail another time...

Dear Sisters,

I've a need to write down and share some thoughts I've had since the installation (like a muffler) of my IUD.

I went to a clinic expecting to be peered and poked at by 87 curious med students. I was surprised and relieved that I got a single doctor, old and apparently reputable. He considerately explained IUDs in theory and practice and then installed it with a minimum of hassle. The pain was considerable but brief. I was weak and had to lie on the table for a while before getting up. While I was there he held my hand -- I wondered about it but was too grateful to be out of pain to be seriously suspicious. On my way out to the hall he slung his arm around my shoulder in a fatherly (?) way. But then he tried to kiss me. I thought o christ but was far too weak to even be enraged -- I wanted to run but could only shuffle out crying.

Since then I have experienced my IUD as an alien and frightening thing. And it has made a thingy out of my whole body. What should have been a positive and liberating action has turned into an ugliness to me. I have always had the best middle-class medical care and consequently a confident, positive attitude toward taking care of business medically. Now I somehow feel that someone has done something to me over which I have no control; it is not at all as if I had voluntarily made a choice and then gone about effectuating that decision. I am experiencing a kind of rejection of my body-- I want to throw it away, toss it out and start over clean and fresh. And for the first time in my life I am experiencing intimations of the stone-in-the-gut feelings that poor women must get when they find themselves pregnant and powerless. Above all I fell a kind of nebulous fright that I think comes from being at once impotent and angered. For the first time I am connecting the words "oppression" and "body" in an intimate way.

I can't identify the source of these feelings. I'm not sure if they all arose because of that revulsive doctor. Perhaps some of the alienation is coming from generalized feelings about my body that I was unaware of. In any case, I ought not to have to feel this way. I'm preparing to fight, it's only that the face of the enemy is not so distinct.

DIRT BAG

AIAW has been invisible in the larger women's movement in Washington to a certain extent because the lesbian community has been invisible...But we are beginning to intensify our struggle against this invisibility...

So please keep going - this is positive plus feedback.

THOSE WOMEN
Washington, D.C.

We're excited about the Skills School they've started. They offer courses in Self Defense, Home Repairs, and Auto Mecanics.

Dear AIAW,

Thanks for the new issue. Each one seems even better than all the others. We need you out here in the eastern boondocks.

I work at the Women's Center in N.Y., which is to some extent, an outpost of the "feminist" part of the women's movement. We're afloat in the anti-racist, anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist sea, but just barely. It's important to get a paper that consistently affirms women and their right to be (even if they're not Vietnamese, or on welfare, etc. etc.). Beyond that, though, the paper has helped us clarify our relationship to ourselves and other women outside our part of the movement in a way which does not deny our own integrity or theirs.

Is there any chance that you will begin to explore the problems of women with children, and children, in a way that goes deeper than the need for babysitting? So far the movement's understanding of child-related issues is rather superficial.

And there's been more: the letter from Deni in Chicago and always the letters of encouragement from Dotti in Euclid, Ohio. If we're leaving anyone out (we probably are) it's not because your letters haven't meant a lot to us. It's more likely our disorganized hurriedness the week of putting out the paper. Please keep writing - it's been really nice for us.
Love to all Revolutionary Gay Feminists

dialogue

AIAW collective had a discussion of an article called, "Gay vs Lesbian". The discussion was tumultuous and that was probably because the article talks about a subject about which there are a lot of fears, hostilities and insecurities. The article makes a distinction between newly gay women and women who have been gay for a long time (lesbians). When we discussed it all of us said things we would not have said any other time because we felt threatened. Newly gay women felt they had to defend themselves against the article's accusation that they have the option to return to men. But I as a gay woman who has been gay for a long time felt a defensiveness that I did not understand.

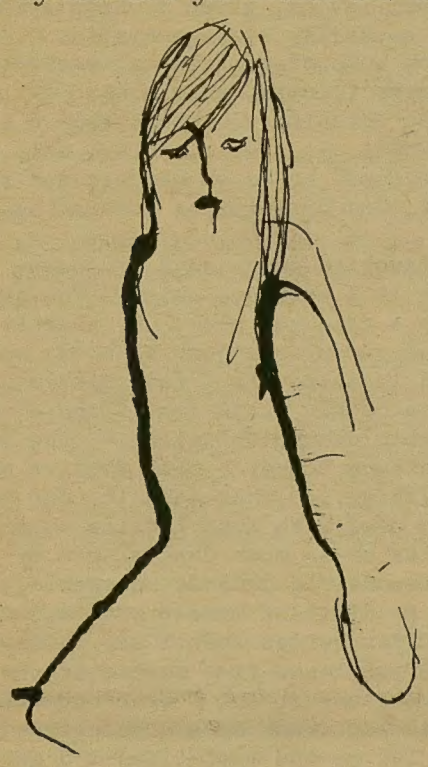
Newly gay women were reacting to the article's divisive distinction by explaining how alike both sides were, how they experienced the same oppression and went through the same things. Somehow that really threatened me and made me say awful things that I really don't believe. What I seemed to be saying was that I was gayer than they were because they'd gotten to think it out first and I hadn't. I didn't want to let them into our community.

AIAW had a meeting the other night at which we discussed my feelings. Now I have a good understanding of where they came from. I was protecting my identity as Lesbian. Once I was ashamed of it, hid it, felt that I was sick to love a woman, but now after years of struggle and the help of a growing gay community it has become something that I'm proud of. It was my years of pain and aloneness that seemed to be dismissed by the discussion - No acknowledgement that being a gay woman wasn't always this good.

It's easiest for me to understand how you feel about your identity as a lesbian if I think about how I feel about my identity as working class. Right now there are few people I trust on the issue of class. Few women I work with now have had my experience or even begun to understand my values. I become defensive when middle class women talk about class and really offended when women who have had all kinds of middle class privileges begin to identify as poor because of a very recent experience of not having as much money as they've been used to. That they can use the word "poor" or the term "working-class" so lightly, that they can think of them as credentials somehow denies the pain they've brought me.

But someday, Carrie, your class consciousness will be good - I know that- feel it by how hard you listen and how seriously you deal with my criticisms. When that time comes will I be able to trust your perceptions or will I resent your not having had the pain I had? Still gayness and class aren't the same even though we both know there is some connection if we can only get that analysis worked out. If your background is middle class you weren't poor, period. But even if you have never identified yourself as a lesbian your background isn't necessarily heterosexual. And even if you never see the possibility of that gay identity you can experience the pain a woman feels always loving her best friends only to be rewarded by standing up at their weddings.

I don't want to argue the hierarchy of oppression. Although I always felt gay pain I didn't have to work painfully through that identity alone as you did. In a very real sense what you have been through made it easier for me - when I finally said I was gay I wasn't alone - you and other women like you were supporting me. I can thank you for that but I can never go through what you did.



I think we understand each other. We have both felt the hurt that comes when someone seems to be dismissing lightly an important formative part of your life. But I can't help wondering whether one of the millions of women who were gay in high school or later for awhile and then for some reason or other got married, would feel the same hurt. I felt hurt because loving women was and is such a big part of my life. It was important in high school because I knew that I was only interested in boys because I was supposed to be. I would have liked to spend time with my girlfriends talking or playing softball, but I knew girls weren't supposed to be like that. It seems like I have spent my whole life trying to be like what everyone said girls <u>should</u> be. I was a tomboy when I was younger and spent third-sixth grades wishing I wanted to be like the other girls - wishing I wanted to wear a skirt to school and didn't like to play softball. Getting into seventh grade solved the skirt problem because then all girls had to wear dresses to school, but it was around that time that I fell in love with the minister's daughter. I knew that wasn't right because it was too strong a feeling -- stronger than any I'd had for a boy. I felt abnormal and alone and worried. Then when I finally kissed a woman and we made love, it was beautiful and I loved her very much. But I also knew it was not the way life was supposed to be for women and there was constant tension between what society said was right and what I felt was right for me. I felt sick and I hated the gayness in me and wanted it out.

So being gay was important then because of the strength of the feeling and the energy I spent thinking and worrying and trying to go straight. Now it is important because after all those years of self-hatred, I've finally accepted myself as gay and would even rather not be any way else. Now to think of myself as a lesbian gives me strength and makes me feel proud of how far I've come -- finally proud.

But what about the women who were gay for awhile and then went straight? (If you can ever really go straight. At one point in the middle of my trying to be straight period, I almost got married. If I had, it would have been **disastrous** and very unhappy for me.) Their gayness must be still smoldering, but as an ulcer within them. Hiding it and with no one to talk to, I wonder how it affects their lives?

The changes I've gone through about the tomboy or butch thing are curious. It seems that up until recently I've tried to deny what I am. When I was a tomboy, I wished that I wasn't. When I got to high school and saw that I was small breasted and small hipped, I kept my hair long so that people wouldn't mistake me for a boy. Oh, that was so humiliating and when I finally did cut my hair, I would make myself wear a skirt everyday just to avoid being called a boy. It has been almost a year that I've been happy with myself about being gay. Increasingly over the year I've come to see and think about myself as feminine. Before when I would wear jeans and an old shirt I would look at myself and think "You look like a boy; you look ugly." But now even when I look real butchy, I look at myself and I see a woman and it seems to me anyone could tell.

One final thing: My defensiveness at that article and our discussion had something to do with it being implied that women coning out now are making a political decision. Even though we as women are changing the whole meaning of that work political, it still hits me wrong. Like if you said to me, "I have made this political decision to be working class," I'd wretch. Do you know what I am trying to say? It's been no thought-out, rational, political alternative - it's been more like a coming home - more gut level - more real and the dyke I feel inside me has no more option to return to a heterosexual world than any of us. It would actually be no option at all. If repression or financial problems caused any of us to turn to men it would not exactly be a free choice and would be terrifyingly painful.

THOUGHTS ON MIDDLE-CLASS GUILT

Right now my class consciousness is an all-over-the-place feeling, a sort of burst of identification with working class female resentment. I think I've just been through an absolution of guilt that I didn't have to have. Like being officially acknowledged as working class -- to myself mostly -- and the most real thing was the pain of realizing I didn't have the choices, the privileges; I thought I had just avoided them -- but they weren't ever available.

For a long time I assumed that I'd have the choices of a middle class lifestyle if I just got through college, just managed to stay in and live cheap until I could start making $7000 a year and see what it was like, and then I'd fuck that and be a freak and move back to the alley. Well, I got to be a freak and live on the alley all right but I missed the in-between part. I never got to go on that little spending spree. And now I know I never will. But all the time I was a freak I identified somehow with the middle-classness of that lifestyle -- the phony anti-materialism, the rejection of financial security, the valuing of sensuality, spiritualism and intellectualizing, and the guilt of being reminded that we could go home to our parents and live in style if we wanted to. But I know I had more of the material things I wanted when I was on my own than when I was growing up. I didn't have much privilege to reject -- but I felt guilty anyway cause I thought I could make it in the straight world if I changed my lifestyle to get a job.

I never stopped thinking about money. Maybe that's the key to it. My parents made me aware of it by the time I was seven at most. I knew money was important to think about because they asked me more questions about it than about what I did at school or who I played with or where I went or when I was going to be back or how I felt. Who what when where how -- why came when I got caught shoplifting. I was eleven. My mother asked me why, why. I didn't want to talk about it. I was pissed off. She threatened not to let me go to Girl Scout camp. But I went anyway and I think my aunt paid for it. That was a real middle class trip and there wasn't anyone into shoplifting there. So I taught everyone in my unit how to play poker for chips and bottle caps. And I gave up shoplifting for ten years.

I guess I'm trying to sound tough. Just keep remembering that every sanction was an economic sanction. Except maybe two other things about my parents that made me feel wierd. One was that they always freaked out about my wanting to stay up late at night. They never really explained it any more than that it wasn't right not to live on their schedule. The other thing was that I felt they really lost track of where I was at by the time I was eight or so. I envied the easy-going relationships most of my girlfriends had with their mothers. My friends woulds say how they'd really get mad sometimes but they knew their mothers loved them anyway. I didn't feel like that. I don't know how they felt about me or about each other except antagonistic. I got it figured with my father when I was fifteen and told him I hated him. He accepted it. By that time I didn't hate my mother. I felt sorry for her.

There is a myth about growing up in a working class family, a myth to the tune of "All You Need Is Love." The myth says that working class parents are strict but loving, given to displaying emotions, close to family people, unusually strong moralizers. I guess I was feeling like that's how some of my friends' parents were, but mine weren't, so mine weren't in the same class. It wasn't material. My parents related to cultural things that I identified as middle class or upper-middle class -- classical art, classical or artsy music, "intellectual" books on history and religion. And they didn't care about cars or interior decorating or the latest in house appliances.

Back to the myth -- one of my favorite songs says it too -- "I grew up in faded denims where love is a precious thing / You grew up in silk and satin where love is a game you play." My parents were uptight and cold. Middle class parents have no monopoly on making their kids feel unloved and isolated. So I felt little security on that score and on the economic score too. I was -- still am -- feeling insecure; it's my basic paranoid feeling -- the theme of my nightmares and bum trips. Roxanne Dunbar's poem that we printed "Never having been sure of anything..." that says it, but how to change it is a struggle. How to deal with that feeling when it absolutely paralyzes me or distracts me so much that I spin my wheels and speed around and make impossible demands on people.

Sometimes I have had the money to distract myself with a new toy. I made a down payment on my first guitar when I was really depressed, and I loved that thing for at least five weeks; it was all I needed. Then I went into a drinking thing. And I went out with whatever men would buy me enough to get drunk on and sometimes I'd leave and sometimes they wouldn't let me and most times I'd get screwed and hate them and hate myself and want to get drunk. I did that for eight or ten months continuously. Now I have a sort of fear about drinking. It makes me feel too vulnerable.

Thinking of booze and drugs reminds me of this "look how bad I'm being" syndrome which may be a class thing -- like acting tough, showing off in self-destructiveness. I've done that and been around people who were doing it but it's like I would be real pissed off at privileged people who did it and kind of in sympathy and going along with people who did it out of desperation, out of oppression. Like one night when I was lost in San Francisco I met a black woman who was a hooker and wanted junk -- I couldn't call that thrill-seeking, not in that scene.

I know I'm rambling but all these things remind me. Desperation--working class. Boredom -- middle class.

Women have to deal with class in a way men don't. The whole social class mobility racket seems to apply only to white males. Maybe that's wrong. I don't know -- thinking about class in relation to women attached to men is something I just don't know 'cause it's so hypothetical to me. I never lived with a man who financially supported me (except my father).

I think I'm feeling less schizophrenic about my class consciousness.

THOUGHTS ON MIDDLE-CLASS GUILT

Guilt reaction makes her focus on herself, her (already done) behavior. The defensive reaction to a confrontation includes an unacceptance of herself as she is: any white woman can be racist, any middle class woman can be class chauvinist. Unacceptance of herself--like the idealism of middle class: not dealing with reality but with what she wishes or would like to be. Being guilty for being middle class and not guilty for her class chauvinist action.

Guilt is a protective reaction, makes her think of herself.

Statement: Your chauvinist behavior/comment has hurt me.

Reaction: I'm caught.

I've failed to live up to my good self-image. I feel terrible. I want this person who has made me feel bad to listen to me and deal with my hurt.

Result: The situation has been turned around to focus on the middle-class perspective. This happens in numerous situations; middle class experience is promoted as the norm, middle-class people are mostly more confident in articulating their feelings, etc.

Working class women are sick of being made to feel responsible for class antagonism and being forced to relate to middle class guilt. Once we felt guilt for just being from a lower class. But feeling guilty for what you are is useless and destructive. Middle-class women were born there and will not understand lower class experience by becoming poor or stuff like that. Middle class women are responsible for their actions and statements, however; those can be dealt with. I don't like to suggest individual solutions but it seems to me that overcoming guilt is a head trip that each woman must struggle through. But just the absolution of middle-class guilt is not going to do anything to fill the needs of working class women.. Maybe it will unparalyze some women to do necessary work which will relate to all of us.

Class in the Poverty Biz
or
Your love is like a Ball & Chain

I am an outreach worker in a government sponsored community action program. It's my job to find the poor of this county, tell them about the services available to them and when asked, act as their advocate in dealing with other agencies. A good job for a nice middle-class, socially-concerned, self-styled radical woman, right? Wrong. The job is inherently classist and in doing the job I have perpetuated that classism, albeit, unknowingly. (That's one of my white, middle-class privileges--I can be a classist, a racist, a homosexist unknowingly. I am allowed to "discover" oppression but I don't have to feel it, just perceive it intellectually. That is the trouble with whites in the black movement, men relating to women's liberation, or any group relating to a politics with which they have no experience. You always have to sit down and take your political pulse and ask yourself, "Am I the oppressor?" Blacks don't have to do that with racism, women feel sexism in their guts and working class people must feel classism without having to think about it or even name it.)

Back to the job. I found out early in the game that I wasn't just an outreach worker. I was the super-duper social-worker Jesus Christ savior of the poor people of this county, and besides that I got to wear pants and be the office radical. Put'em all together and what does it spell? Co-option. I act as the rev-proof safety valve for the poor of Johnson County. When they've had it out with Welfare, or they can't make their rent or they're out of food, they come to me and my counterparts and we dig up the money, or smooth the ruffled feathers or get an extension or whatever. What we do is shield the enemy: put off the time when the poor will realize that the enemy is not their neighbor who's ripping off more food stamps than them. That is is whoever put a price on food to begin with.

The point I'm trying to make is that my job has revealed a classism and a class arrogance in myself that I didn't know was there. The arrogance of believing that I can speak for the poor better than they can. The arrogance that comes from having power over people; a job here, a food order there all add up to power.

I took the job for the money and also because I thought I was doing something at least politically palatable. Well, I'm choking on the politics but the money still looks good. So what can I do? (You've heard that question before, right? It's always asked by some earnest person in the back of the auditorium. Asked of Third World people, asked of women. The oppressor asks it of the oppressed. It reeks of guilt.)

What can I do? It's really not a question I can answer. Probably just shut up and listen.

Sponsored by Action Studies

Last June I applied for a job as coordinator of Action Studies at the U of I and got it. Action Studies is sort of a free university within the structure of and funded by the state university.

The office is run by a coordinator and a secretary. All the coordinators up until me had been men and all the secretaries had been women. At the time I came into the office, the secretary, who was my age, had been working at AS for two years and knew how to do everything. She knew the procedures and channels for setting up courses, and about all university forms (there are thousands) and how to use them. I knew none of this so she taught me. Of course, the easiest part to learn was the prestige work of setting up courses. It took me six more months to learn about the voucher invoices, requisitions, local small order forms and which one to use for what. But isn't that the way it always is. The prestige work is the easiest by any standard of intelligence or skills. All it takes to do these jobs is PR and personality skills that only people of the upper classes have the opportunity to develop.

Anyway, even though I didn't like it and tried to equalize things by learning her job, the time and work factors in the office were often such that we couldn't afford the time for me to slowly and painstakingly type out a requisition. The result was that because of this division of labor, we fell into a boss-secretary power relationship.

After about two months she had to leave and another woman whom I had known for a long time got the secretary job. We talked and agreed that since we both knew pretty much the same amount about how to run the office, were both women, and were both the same age that there was no good basis for either one of us being the boss and the other doing the typing. So because there was no one else who was immediately superior to us and controlled the office we decided to do away with the boss job and share all the work.

It was pretty easy to initiate this because we both were at the same low level of competence on running the office and could learn the work together and equally--both the prestige work and the shit work. We worked this way all year with only a few problems. It's amazing how powerful the labels are that are put on you and it was hard for us to quit thinking of ourselves as coordinator and secretary. Especially when the structure of the university enforced it and most everyone that would come in (especially males) would relate to us in terms of that hierarchy. The structure of the university was difficult to deal with because they require one person's name to be signed to all forms and letters and only invite that person to meetings with the deans.

My job as coordinator was only a one year job and after about nine months it was time to begin thinking about picking a new one. The steering committee (10 people) which is the governing body of Action Studies does the choosing.

Sara-savage (the other office worker) and I (both of us are on the steering committee) began to reminisce about the nice time we'd had working together and about how different it would be if they picked a man for coordinator -- the old order would be reinstated. We decided that we would ask the steering committee to make a policy that the office work be shared equally between coordinator and secretary. Well, we did ask and immediately realized the result had to be classist.

Although everyone on the steering committee agreed that it was a fair idea, their conception of how to do it was very different from ours. They immediately began to talk about how the name of the job would have to be changed from "secretary" to "co-coordinator" or something like that, how there'd have to be an ad in the paper stating the qualifications and then an interview. Listening to them, I realized that the way the job was going to be publicized would eliminate a lot of women (if we can assume that only women consider secretarial jobs) from applying for the job. When you start calling it a high-fallutin job then women who think of themselves as only qualified to be secretaries will be afraid to apply. As they talked the two jobs started seeming more and more equal. They began to say that if the jobs are equal, our ad for secretary should state the same qualifications as the ad for coordinator (which is billed as a big boss-coordinator job with qualities centering around PR etc).

Sara-savage and I objected that advertising the secretary job similarly to the coordinator made it no longer a job a lot of women would apply for. There are few enough jobs around that women can get without Action Studies eliminating one of them.

I'm really sorry we started the whole thing. Our intentions were good, but we were naive. We wanted to be fair to women, but the result was definitely more unfair--the elimination of a women's job. We were also naive about the structured-in class bias of academic institutions. One of the most classist ways the steering committee began thinking of the secretary job as it was newly defined was that the person had to have an interest in Action Studies, think of it as not just an eight-to-five job, be dedicated. All of that is middle class value that implies that there is something wrong with doing a job for money or needing a job because you need the money. It also eliminates the kind of woman who hasn't had the opportunity to see that an elitist thing like experimental education is something to be dedicated to.

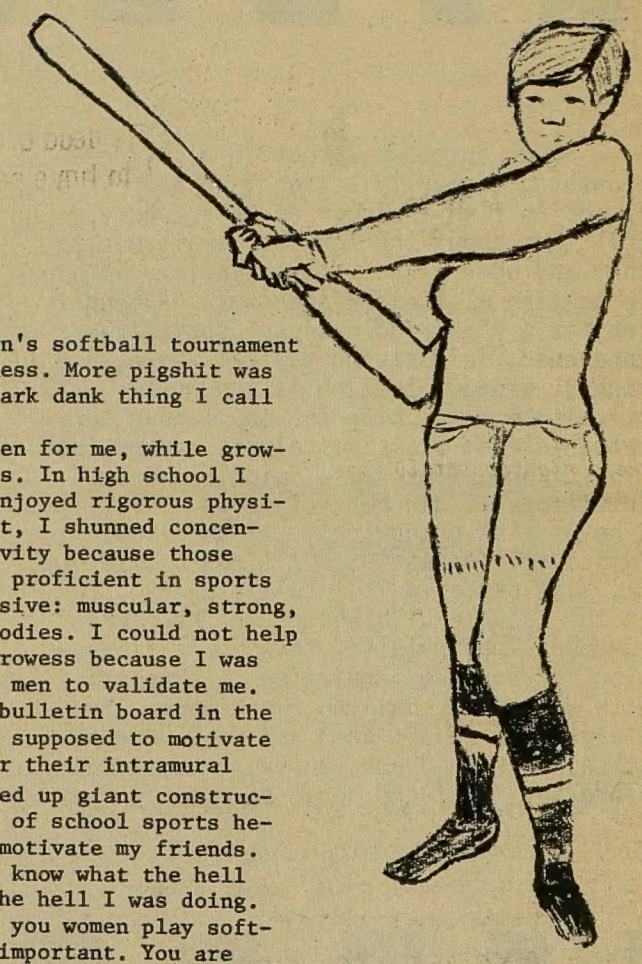
We argued and argued on that point and they just couldn't see it. Finally I realized that it was futile to argue against class bias here; it is built into the university. Every time I would say that requiring applicants to have special interest in the job biased our selection in favor of middle class people, they would look at me and say, "That's unreasonable. The person has got to be interested." And they're right. Within the elevated context of higher education which deals with ideas and ideals and encompasses much meaningful work, suggesting that someone be hired just because they need a job, is unreasonable.

I learned alot by constantly having to accuse the steering committee of class bias and argue against it. I learned how hard it is to always have to argue in defense of yourself; how committees like that must always beat down working class people. It's too degrading a situation for anyone who is in that position of having to defend their dignity at every turn of the conversation. People who don't directly experience working class predjudice should be the ones to point it out. If the women's movement is to become united along class, race, and sexual lines then it is up to middle class women to constantly root out class bias; white women, racism; and straight women, homosexism.

A PLACE FOR US.....

Female culture to me is how women relate. Because I live with a man, I am constantly aware of the class differences between men and women. Women start out equal, so there is not the constant struggle to equalize things that goes on between a man and a woman. We also have in common a personal history of learned sensitivity - "intuition" - about people and situations that doesn't have to be explained.

Being with women, and being open and free about relating to them, is a different world. A refuge. A refuge that becomes threatening as it conflicts with my reality. To let my part in a woman-community grow, I separated my worlds. Any woman who has had to do that knows the results - disaster. Accepting myself - and my situation, for I feel I must, has been hard.



Going to the women's softball tournament raised my consciousness. More pigshit was rooted out of that dark dank thing I call a mind, a memory.

There have not been for me, while growing up, female models. In high school I liked athletics; I enjoyed rigorous physical activity. And yet, I shunned concentration on that activity because those young women who were proficient in sports were scary and repulsive: muscular, strong, confident in their bodies. I could not help myself to physical prowess because I was too damn busy asking men to validate me. I remember making a bulletin board in the locker room that was supposed to motivate girls to come out for their intramural sports...and I slapped up giant construction papered figures of school sports heroes MALE HEROES to motivate my friends. My friends. I didn't know what the hell that meant or what the hell I was doing.

My body. Watching you women play softball my body became important. You are teaching me to respect that part of me so denied to me in high school. I have accepted years as toneless masses of flesh. When one of the women made an error during the game I said out loud, without thinking: "THAT'S ME." And an instant later I realized what that meant and years of rage came up my throat because that was me. That is me, lacking the confidence of body; fearing pain.

FULFILLM

I take a
To find
I tipple
To handl
I wipe o
To relax
I have a
To make
I have a
To make
And I ta
So I can

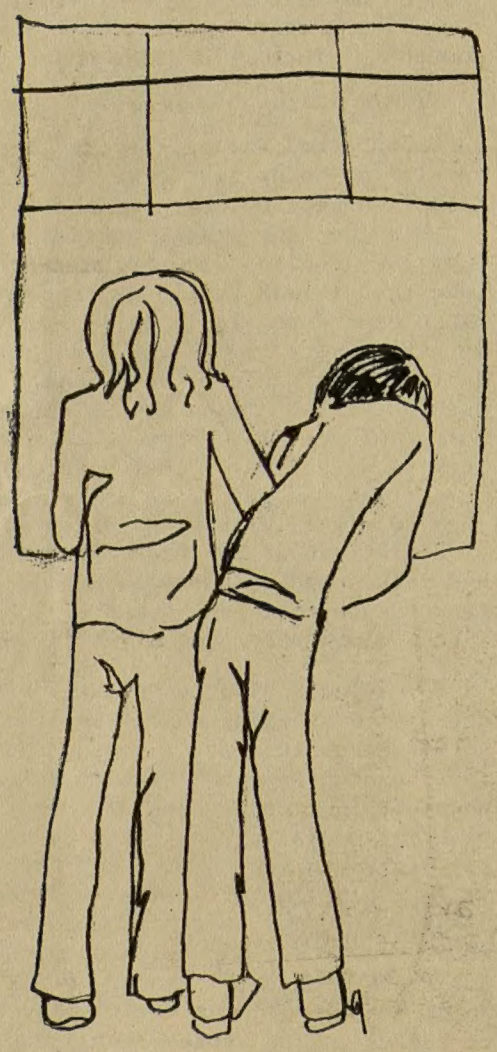
dancin
gettin
worryi
feelin
you do
having
physi
in a
gettin
can't
seein
live o

LOVE POEM

At the place where her breasts
come together
two thumbs width a channel,
I ride my hands to anchor
my eyes to angle.

At the place where her thighs
come together,
I said, "You smell like the ocean,"
and lay down my tongue
by the dark tooth edge of sleeping.
"Swim," she said.
And I did.
I did.

Last month there was a women's poetry reading that was fantastic. Women from everywhere read - mostly poetry they, themselves had written... Women from high school, from Ain't I A Woman?, teachers, friends, women from the University poetry workshop. Hopefully, the poems can be compiled and printed (maybe by a women's press!).



A girl grows up
And as she does she wonders,
What is tomorrow? When is tomorrow?
And the people kill her with their answers and lies.
And dawn breaks
And tomorrow comes.

Sheri

Female Vocalists

Laura Nyro
Carole King
J.D. Taylor
Buffy Ste.-Marie
Janis Joplin
Linda Ronstadt
Chris
Kate Taylor
Celia Wheaton
Fanny
Joan Baez
Melanie
Genya Ravan
Nina Simone
Joni Mitchell
Judy Henske

Aretha Franklin

Sometimes now I really dance - fre always wanted the music - li crazy hair drag q dyke fly

Most all of the things we got into were really fine. It was so good to see more and more women getting into things - getting to know and care about other women. It was good for us to constantly be meeting new people to know and love. But there were some hassles. Sometimes it seemed that being so deeply involved in each others lives, as we were, was just too much to handle.

FULFILLMENT

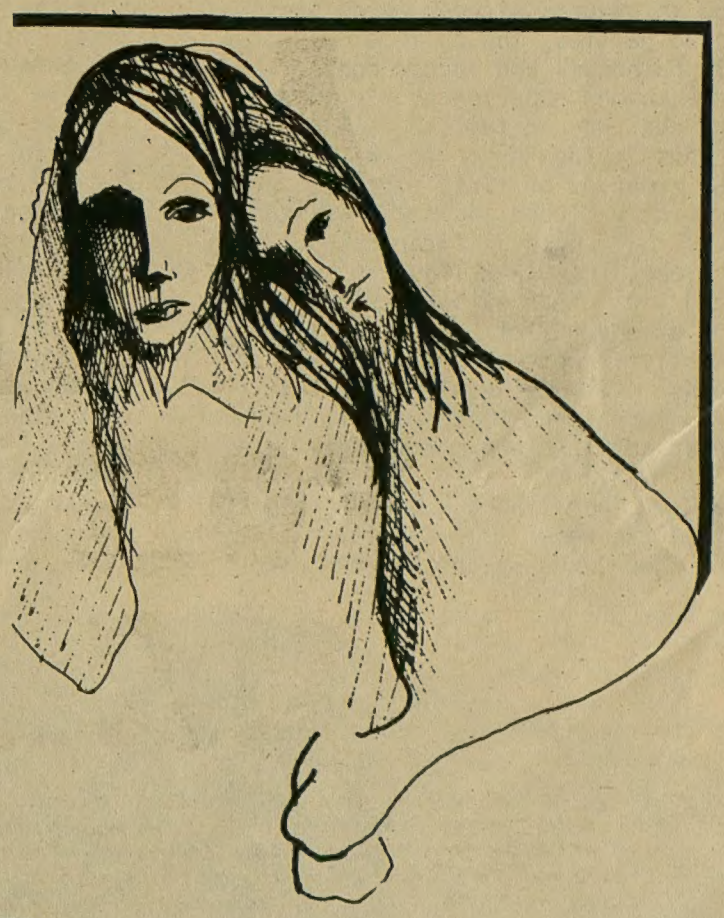
I take an eye-opener at 10 a.m.
To find challenge in Ring Around Rosie.
I tipple at 11
To handle Ring Around the Collar.
I wipe out at naptime
To relax and enjoy it.
I have a pick-me-up at 3
To make the afternoon speed by.
I have a few cocktails at 5
To make the skillet sing.
And I take a nightcap at 10
So I can sleep.

Anonymous

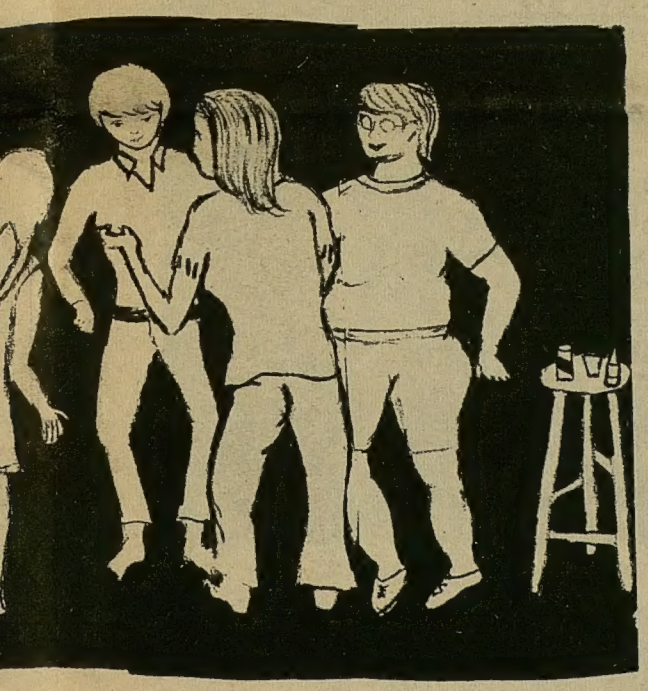
AN EPISTLE FOR TASHA

The dead are the only people
to have permanent dwellings.
We, nomads of Revolution
Wander over the desolation of many generations
And are reborn on each other's lips
To ride wild mares over unfathomable canyons
Heralding dawns, dreams and sweet desire.

RMB



Parties
dancing....
getting drunk/stoned together...
worrying about someone
feeling something for you that
you don't feel for them...
having an excuse to be
physically close to people
in a happy atmosphere....
getting into a situation you
can't handle...
seeing people you don't
live or work with....



we all suffered
together thru
the yucky
cock-rock
band that
preceeded
Laura Nyro at
her concert.
(Laura was
fine). Now
some of us
have a music
cell. We're
writing &
singing our
own and other
women's music.

If
after I say I love you
and it is yet the same
then I want no more
of that old game.

When I say sister
I love you
I make no demands
I touch you
without possessive
hands.

I have had more
than enough
of loneliness.
I would not trade that now
for onlyness.

What I look for now
is only found
with many

Loving is not
singular
it is not spent
in dimes and pennies.

Plural. Among. Between
all of us
loving each other.

Is that what revolutionaries
have always said,
my sister?

ruth

ow I can dance-
- free - like I
ted to move - feel
c - like my body -
hairy freak
queen
e flying

People went to the free medical clinic together when they needed to see a doctor. They went into the examining room together for support. The doctor must have been slightly freaked out, he told them they would have to be seen separately next time.

change

your eyes looked into me,
now look past
seeing only another
and your own pleasure.

once a closeness, now only distance
as if you're afraid my love
will be a burden;
never was for me, but maybe
that's changing too.

The
best thing
is the general
atmosphere we
have created for
ourselves. Having
support when we want
it. Being able to help
each other through hard
times - personal and political
hassles; going places together;
sitting together at concerts,
movies, rallys, baseball games.

Female culture to me means lesbian culture, and until recently it has been invisible to most and silent. It has always existed, but was never talked of. Lesbian culture exists in the Girl Scouts, camps, 4-H, dorms, lesbian subgroups, gay bars, and women's collectives. It has been the intuition of gayness without words passing, underground parties, the culture of stolen kisses in bathrooms and locked doors. It has been a common experience, the quiet suffering that we can tell in each other which brings us together. It has been the cherished memories of first embraces, memories carefully hidden and never written of in letters that could be intercepted. It has been fear, fear that leads to self-hatred and lies, fear of parents, of husbands, of discovery, of policemen, fear that is flagrantly forgotten sometimes when we get together. It has been the careful probing conversations that talk all around our gayness until we are sure enough to kiss.

Since Gay Liberation and Women's Liberation, since the women's living collective, since new women, who haven't been hiding all their lives have joined the gay community, Lesbian Culture has come above ground some and broadened. Now I talk about it as women's culture and conceive of it as less silent--more open. Now it's women's parties where we dance. It's feeling free about showing affection to other women while within the protecting boundaries of the communit. It's almost always greeting each other with a hug. It's watching Carrie and Alice drive up to Eagle's super market sitting close to each other like heterosexual couples do and slapping your knee laughing because they're so brave. Or it's Linda kissing Connie in the middle of John's grocery store. It's building up an oral herstory of incidents that are passed around the community, told with great care and pleasure. Like the time JD kissed Ellen in the parking lot of the Welfare Offices at 5:00 when everyone was getting off work. It's being able to mess around with Pat when I meet her on the street, saying "Hi little cutie, you come here often?" And she answers some neat femy thing and we go on and on not caring who hears, but I usually break up and start laughing.

Failing to put Feminism in a class perspective or how a female culture is developing and growing.

In writing about the female subculture that I think we have created in the collectives that I live and work in, I first would like to explain how that discussion is limited by not being able to see clearly at all how class fits in with that subculture. We prefaced the articles about collective living a couple of is - sues ago by saying that we thought the articles sounded more marxist than feminist because we dealt so heavily with the economics of the collective and not the sub-culture that had grown. Recently we've been talking more about class as the paper reflects, but this time we've tried to see it in more feminist terms. Anne made the comment that indeed our collective articles were very different than the article about the COPS Commune in Berkeley that we all read in Liberation, Autumn, 1970. She said that the things we dealt with in our articles were very different than the things that the male who wrote that article saw as important and dealt with alot. In a previous issue of AIAW we had four articles about a living collective written by members of a women's living collective here in Iowa City. Three of the articles dealt mainly with the economics of the collective and how many of our problems revolved around this. The fourth article dealt with the outside influences in the collective. Granted we had very

similiar problems, however, we as women see money as something of prime importance because a great deal of our oppression centers around economics. The male who wrote the COPS Commune article saw sex of major importance. We too were dealing with sex - but homosexuality not heterosexuality in our collective and for many of us it was a very heavy thing. However, with time almost all of us worked through lesbianism, and we've gone on to different problems concerning being gay. It seems to me that while times were good we earnestly tried to deal with many problems, but the two problems that we never could get into proper perspective or deal with realistically were money and then eventually class differences as they became more apparent and important. So we've asked why is it that we can't see feminism in a class perspective or class in a feminist perspective? Even in the past issues of AIAW it is obvious that issues dealing heavily with feminism deal little with class and vice versa. So not knowing exactly what all this has to do with a female sub-culture, I'll try to describe a little of the feel of what I think has grown here in Iowa City, much of which our living collective was the center of.

I remember last summer as the time that many of our old friends dropped by the house alot. Occasionally we'd all of a sudden start to have a spur of the moment dance. We'd be playing records and then people would get up and start dancing and pretty soom almost all of us would find ourselves dancing. For me the summer is most remembered for the dances, working through my feelings (really inhibitions) about touching other women, taking showers together, and dealing with lesbianism a whole lot in the house.

It's real hard to remember back to those days and for some reason it's hard to think of me ever being any other way than I am right now. But I know that I was very different. I remember the summer as being fun. We had few money problems at that time, and not having to hassle with that gave us alot of time to work through many things, and to develop a trust and love for each other that would have come much more difficultly. Also, that summer the gay cell really got going. In the gay cell women were able to talk with each other about things they had never dared talk to anyone else about before. Problems were discussed and everyone showed concern and interest.

With fall came going back to school for me. The fall was marked by me relating alot to the gay cell, really loving the women there, getting through placing heterosexual roles on gay women, (usually their own). Slowly we have become more comfortable , e.g. not as guilty, about our decision to try to meet our needs. With this I think that other people have come more and more to accept the definition that we had chosen for ourselves. So that now even though the problem is by no means entirely worked out, people are once again more comfortable about our collective and what we are. However, during this whole time we were having the financial problems and problems of class differences mentioned in the other articles two issues earlier. These problems being centered around our feminism and woman identification did a great deal to pretty much split our house in two, so that now each group relates to the group of women in town that we want to. This division is too complex to discuss thoroughly but it has to go with such issues as separatism, gayness and feminism vs humanism.

Out of our living collective I see many other things coming besides those things that I have already mentioned. There are the gay parties that most of us in the house have gone to and where we've met many new women and become better friends with other gay women. There's the constant playing of music sung by female singers, and being excited everytime we discover another record by a woman. There's the free space that all of us were given to be something different, ie. less in the roles put on us by society, and become more what's really inside us. For example, I discovered that not only could I dance, but I love it, and I don't feel uptight about it in front of women. We're doing more things together as women and with other women, such as the women who are on the softball team. We've learned that we are not all exceptions and that you can usually assume that to a degree other women have been fucked over just like you have. This realization and living with each other has given us confidence to reach out to other women that we don't even know and offer them help. For example, on one of our many trips to the local free medical clinic we met a young woman getting birth control pills, talked with her, and gave her a ride home. Also, we are much stronger now and stick-up for each other, be it when facing a prick medical student or some jocks making sexist remarks at a wedding.

As a result of living in a female sub-culture for a year now, I find that there are many assumptions that I make that other women can not relate to, and I find it very hard to relate to many of their problems that they see as important, ie. their husbands. Obviously, there is a schizophrenia that goes with living in a sub-culture.

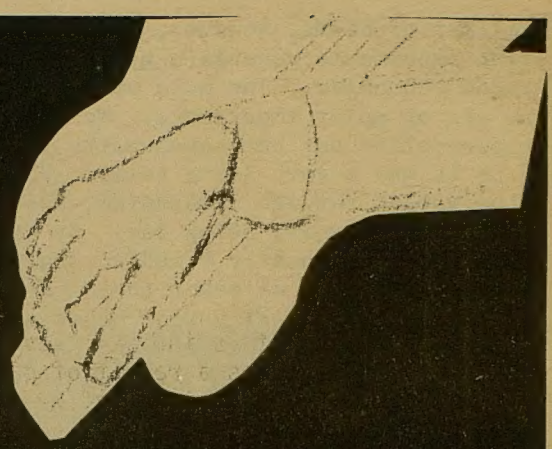
becoming very strongly gay identified, discussing woman-identified woman alot, having my mind blown by it, working through the relationship I was having with a woman that caused me much trauma, and going to conferences and meeting gay women. At the same time we had moved to a much bigger house, and lots of new women were coming over, gay parties were being held more frequently, people from all over were crashing at our house, and the type of music we played was becoming almost always female singers. At that time we and other people viewed our house as a place where women could get together, where women could come for help if they needed it, as a place to crash if a women needed it and as a place to come to rap. In general it was viewed as a women's center. However, those of us who lived in the house found that we could never live in such a place and expect to have our own personal needs met. Yet we held on to the idealism of trying to be everything a women's center would be and trying to meet our own needs too. Somehow if we couldn't do that then we had failed all those women that needed us.

With time we became more comfortable with our decision to try to meet our own needs first. However, frequently there was disagreement about this, and other people still saw us in the idealistic way of being able to meet everyone else's needs

Our living collective has been a haven where we've been able to talk with each other about feminist issues. We've been able to talk with each other about our feelings and we've done it as one woman to another. So in a way we've developed our own style of talking, that is, openly and honestly with out the bull shitting around that male left politics so often reflects. Because I think we've developed even a different way of talking, I'm sure this also separates us from other people. But also talking alike and dealing with the same hassles has helped unify those of us who work together and live together. The living collective has now dissolved, and four of us will continue to live collectively. The female sub-culture which has developed and grown here in Iowa City around the living collective during the past year will continue to grow mainly among those of us who are women-identified women.

Last, this article was written from the perspective of me, living in the living collective. It says little about what effect others such as the gay community had on the collective. I by no means want to imply that the living collective was the center of things happening here. In fact I feel the gay community has been a very important part of our collective and too often we've failed to see ourselves in terms of that community.

anybody know a female bass player?



There's a record album that I'm waiting to hear--I'm imagining it cause it hasn't come out yet. It will be songs of love and revolutionary feminism by the best musical-lesbian group that ever was. It will be written, sung, played, arranged, recorded, engineered, produced and distributed by women. It will be dancing music; it will be a total high for us; it will be incomprehensible to men. It will help bring all the woman-identified musicians out of the woodwork. I feel it's coming; the direction is shown by women's music in the last few years....

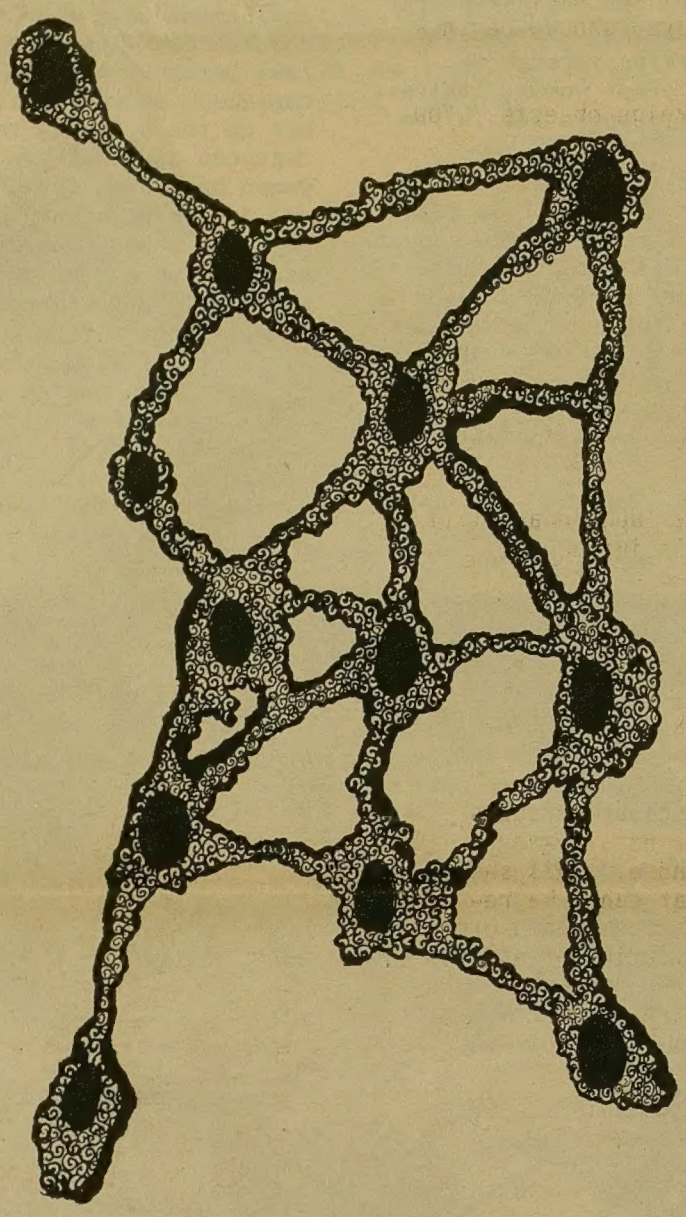
...I'm thinking of what music brought me out of the woodwork to where I am with several other sisters, getting a band together. Where'd we get the idea that we could do it? ...There's music drifting through my head: "I can't go back there any more/ you know my keys don't fit the door/ you know my thoughts don't fit the man/ they never can, they never can..." Joni Mitchell--her first album was an inspiration, a source of finding strength; she had it all together in herself--composer, arranger, performer--she even did the artwork on the jacket. Total effect. I thought, sure, I knew women could do this and now they're being allowed to.

That sense of being in control comes through the music of some really strong women...not all...like I really love the sound of Judy Collins' "Wildflowers", but I feel her being crowded by a dozen arrangers, instrumentalists, directors--she's being handled, put on a pedestal and it's not her show. Control... is Laura Nyro, stopping, starting, wailing and crashing on the piano as she feels like it...music follows the unsteady rhythm of her breathing. Sometimes I can't distinguish the words but her feeling comes through clearly and I don't miss the sense of it. From Nyro I've picked up on using a word for its sound more than just its meaning ...in the course of a song she can change the meaning of a word.

The powerful feeling: Nina Simone has really got it down. When she plays there is no wondering who runs it. I saw her once, years ago, but I know that feeling; no ambiguity, no explanations, like she's saying yeah, you heard me right, you have to handle how you feel about that. I do not think I'd ever felt a woman's consciousness of herself that strongly; her self-awareness as female, as black, as someone who would be listened to.

Being listened to is this incredible breakthrough. Some people have a hard time getting those two things together: female musician--like you have to be one or the other. Some recognition. Like when I played blues harp in a coffeehouse jam session and a man came up to me with "uh, gee I never saw a chick who could play harmonica before." He was so impressed. I was so disgusted. Of course women can. The only big group I've heard with a female harp player, though, is Ten Wheel Drive: Genya Ravan, a strong-voiced woman hanging in there with nine male instrumentalists. What does a woman have to go through?

The professional music world is so dehumanizing, and since women are dehumanized in so many contexts, it's doubly hard. Melanie spells it out in a song I really dig, called "Tuning My Guitar": "You stand behind my curtain and hope I'll be a star/ You say get out and sell them/ but selling's not my aim/ I'm gonna sing the life I'm living/ and try and ease the pain". Alot of Melanie's songs are written out of pain, especially her last album, "The Good Book"...the pain of saying goodbye, the pain of lost childhood, the pain of misunderstanding. Women sing about their feelings in real, unexaggerated images while men seem to look for stereotypes. I always felt those "my woman left so I'll kill myself" songs to be phony--like men were saying how they thought they should feel, going to extremes.



Some songs that really stay with me are those which question our feelings and reactions: this doesn't happen oftem in music because the tendency is to simplify ideas in short phrases. The questioning songs really make me think--you know how a line or two will run through your head all day. A big discovery in this was an album by Linda Ronstadt and the Stone Poney called "Evergreen Vol. II". Remember "You and I travel to the beat of a different drum?" Instead of the usual romantic bullshit about lifelong love affairs, Linda ends it "So long I'll be leavin'/ and I see no sense in this cryin' and grievin'/ We'll both live a lot longer if you live without me." Another song centers around the line "Is it true that there's just one for one like I've been told?" The song "New Hard Times", which doesn't deal with love at all seems to be addressed to aging liberals: "When eating comes too easy/ Nothing makes you think/ There's too much time to sun yourself/ and too much wine to drink." Linda Ronstadt has a clear, really feeling voice. Her music is the country western sound with a rock rhythm. I used to hate country music; what turned me around was her record called "Hand Sown/ Home Grown". (I'm not usually up for plugging records but Ronstadt isn't very well known and we need to hear more of her kind of vibrations.)

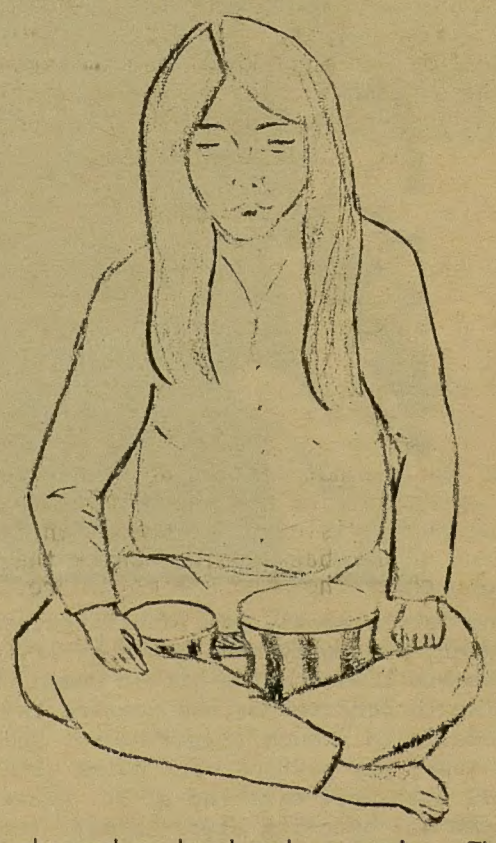
Women's music is changing, women's music has changed my head and my music. The latest in a series of highs are Carole King coming into full view--we heard her songs for years and now that she's recording it sort of brings it together; and the appearance of an all female rock band from Berkely, four women who call themselves "Fanny", have one album out and another coming soon. I feel these people are the beginning of a rush of women musicians whose presence will become a regular, enduring force in our culture. Our voice is growing stronger.

Music cell is a refuge--complete refuge from all male music. The cell is into women's music. Everything we do seriously, is written by women, for women, and preferably, increasingly about women. Most established music is written about love and it is more important for us to deal with women we are loving, or trying to love, (including ourselves) than the man that "done us wrong" or that we're "going to get" (even not for any loving purpose). Blatant, harsh "cock rock" is not the only kind of male music. (Songs about the past ...dealings with men....message songs directed to men... waste of time..)

When we practice we do some songs that are written by men and some by women that do not deal with woman-identified-woman politics. This is a source of hassle and frustration, but as our skill improves and the number of worthwhile songs that we all know increases, this will change. Most of our best woman songs have been written by members of the cell.

As I get more and more into making women's music my tolerance for other music decreases. I still listen to everything from Fanny to the Rolling Stones, but not without definitely increasing feelings of frustration and contradiction.

Music cell is definitely involved in consciousness-raising--constant analyzation of our music.



Taking Care of our Own — Artificial Respiration

Artificial respiration is a method of getting air in and out of a person's lungs until she can breathe on her own. Most people can live only about six minutes after they stop breathing. Artificial respiration must begin as soon as possible after natural breathing stops. It must also be used when natural breathing is so irregular or shallow that it is ineffective.

Breathing may stop as a result of gas or drug poisoning, electric shock, choking, drowning, suffocation, injuries to the head or neck, poliomyelitis, or convulsions.

The mouth-to-mouth (or mouth-to-nose) method of artificial respiration is the simplest and most effective. The back-pressure arm lift method is the second most desirable. It should be used only when injuries to the head or face prevent the use of mouth-to-mouth (or mouth-to-nose).

Here is how you do mouth-to-mouth (or mouth-to-nose):

1. Place the person who has stopped breathing on her back. If there is another person with you they should call an ambulance or rescue squad immediately. If you are alone you should begin artificial respiration immediately.

2. Before starting any type of artificial respiration be sure the mouth and throat are clear of mucus and foreign objects. You may turn the patients head to the side and use your fingers. You may cover your fingers with a piece of cloth to help remove mucus and slippery objects.

The patient may vomit during the application of artificial respiration. This is something they don't tell you in most life-saving courses. She may vomit soon after you begin artificial respiration or especially in the case of drowning she may vomit after she begins to breathe on her own. You should be ready for this anytime. When it occurs you should turn the patient on her side immediately so that she doesn't choke, clear out her mouth when she is finished vomiting. Resume application of artifical respiration immediately. Don't worry about a little excess vomit on the patient's face, every minute counts.

3. Tip the head back so that her chin points upward and lift her lower jaw from beneath and behind so that it juts out. This moves the base of the tongue away from the back of the throat, so it does not block the passage of air to the lungs. You will have to hold the jaw in place by cupping your hand under her chin. It helps to keep the head in the correct position if you place something like a folded jacket or towel or similar thing under the back of the neck in addition to holding her head in position.

4. You can blow into a person's lungs through either her mouth or nose. Open your mouth wide and place it tightly over the person's mouth. Air can be blown through an unconscious person's teeth even though they are clenched. Pinch her nostrils shut. Or close her mouth and place your mouth over her nose. This should be used when an obstruction is in the mouth that can't be removed or when there is a severe mouth injury that prevents proper contact. At this point the procedure for application of artificial respiration to children changes. The difference between application to adults and children is very important to the life of the child. This procedure is explained else where on this page by this*.

5. Blow into the mouth or nose, continuing to hold the unconscious person's lower jaw so that it juts out to keep the air passage open.

6. Remove your mouth from the patients, turn your head to the side and listen for the out flow of air returning from the lungs. If you hear it you will know that an exchange of air has occured. You may also watch for the rising and falling movement of the chest. If the sound is only slightly audible or the movement of the chest is slight you may not be exhaling enough air into the patient's lungs.

7. You should continue and repeat the process. Blow into her mouth or nose about 12 times a minute. An adult at rest breathes about 18 times a minute, taking in about a pint of air with each breath. Don't blow too hard, but listen for the sound of the air leaving the lungs and watch for the rising and falling of the chest. For an adult inhale more than usual before exhaling into the patient's lungs. Although there is not as much oxygen in the air you exhale as in that you inhale there is enough to be very helpful to someone who is unable to breathe on her own.

8. If you are not getting an exchange of air, turn the patient on her side and strike her sharply between the shoulder blades. This should help dislodge any object in the air passages. Place the patient on her back again. Check the position of the head and jaw and check the mouth to make sure there is not foreign matter in it.

Normal breathing may start up again after 15 minutes of artificial respiration. But if it doesn't you should continue the procedure until you are positive life is gone. It is very tiring to apply artificial respiration; you should alternate with other people if possible. This helps to maintain a continuous adequate flow of air to the unconscious person's lungs.

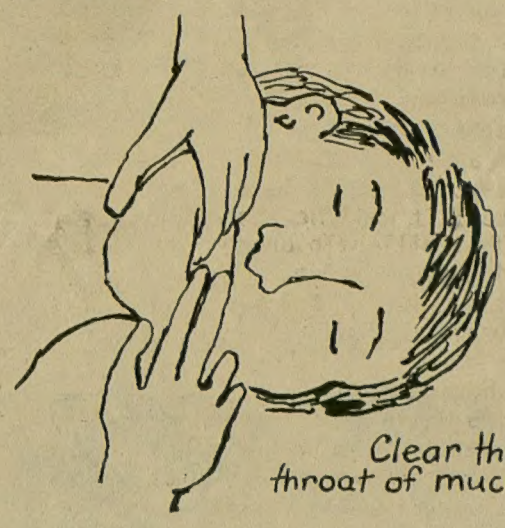
Cases of electric shock, and drug or carbon monoxide poisoning may require artificial respiration for long periods.

One of the first signs of restored breathing may be a sigh. Breathing may be irregular at first. Artificial respiration should be continued until regular breathing occurs.

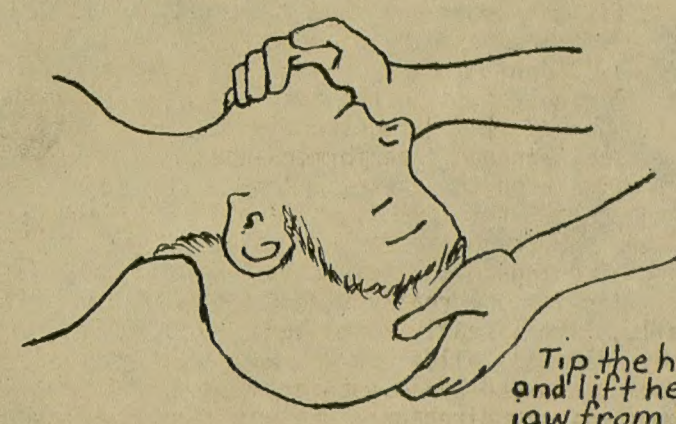
When normal breathing resumes the person usually recovers rapidly. You should check carefully for other injuries. If there are none she should rest for several hours and then she may return to normal activities. If you suspect other injuries exists , the patient should be taken to a hospital.

* The procedure for children is the same except for two very important points. The first is that your mouth should be placed over both the mouth and nose, unless it is not possible because of injury to either the mouth or nose. The second is very important. The lung capacity of a child is of course not as great as that of an adult. You should blow into a child's mouth less vigorously than you would an adult's, using shallow breaths about 20 times a minute. If you blow too vigorously there is danger of bursting the child's lungs. Listen for the sound of an exchange of air and watch for the rising and falling movement of the chest.

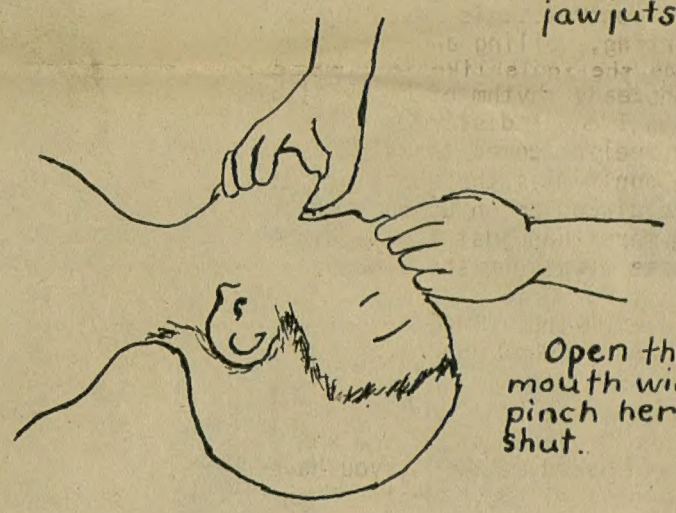
In order to be able to use this procedure successfully to help out sisters it is very important to practice it many times on a dummy or another sister.



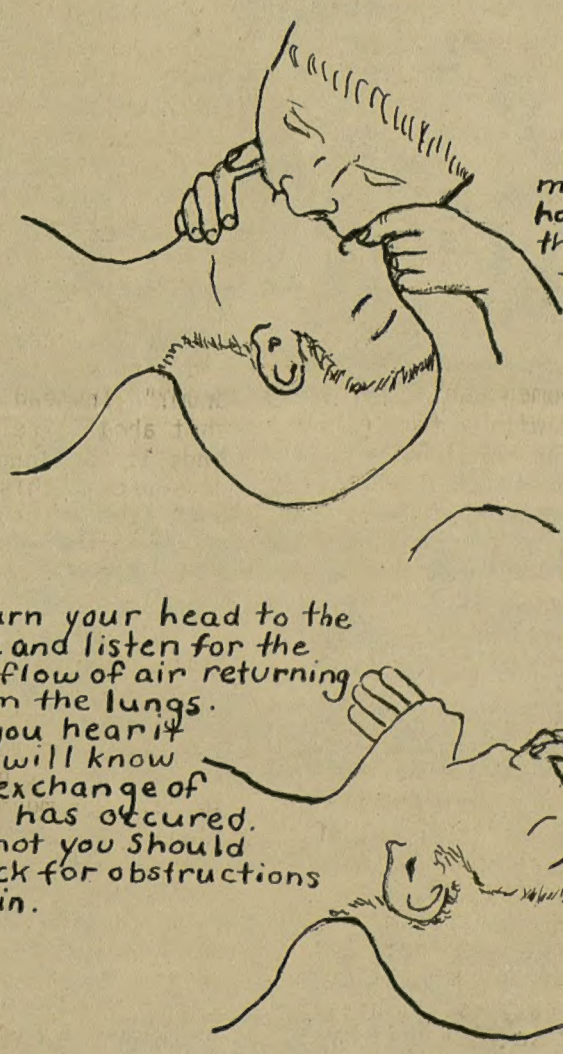
Clear the mouth and throat of mucus and foreign objects.



Tip the head back and lift her lower jaw from beneath and behind so the jaw juts out.



Open the patient's mouth wide and pinch her nostrils shut.



Blow into the patient's mouth, continuing to hold the lower jaw so that it juts out to keep the air passage open.

Turn your head to the side and listen for the out flow of air returning from the lungs. If you hear it you will know an exchange of air has occured. If not you should check for obstructions again.

THE GAY WOMEN'S WEST COAST CONFERENCE will be held June 25-27 at 2201 South Union in Los Angeles. There will be workshops discussing the social, political and emotional position of lesbians today; gay feminists Phyliss Lyons and Del Martin will speak; an all-women's dance will be held; and Sunday will be Christopher Street West, the gay parade. Registration fee is $3.00 to D.O.B. Center, 1910 South Vermont, L.A. 90007. Straight sisters are welcome.

WOMEN'S ABORTION PROJECT -- NEW YORK CITY

"We refer women to office-clinic abortions for $100 plus $10 for the Abortion Project. Prospects in the future for getting the price lower, although we're in the midst of getting worked over by the NY state laws again.

"Anyway, we're the only abortion project that is controlled by women. The abortionists are men but they're very strictly supervised by us. The doctors must give 10% free abortions, so we absorb some women who can't pay $110. The doctors also must employ women from the abortion project as paramedical aides. The paramedicals' job is to talk to women about the abortion, their bodies, WL, the abortion laws, etc., while they wait for the abortion, and to sit with them and reassure them while they get the abortion.

"We've also been able to influence other clinics in town (non-WL) to hire abortion aides to be nice to women.

"We also can refer women for salines, but that is much tighter in N.Y. right now."

ABORTION PROJECT, c/o WOMEN'S CENTER
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Ain't I A Woman is published every three weeks by the Angry Independent Amazon Women P.O. Box 1169, Iowa City, Iowa 52240.

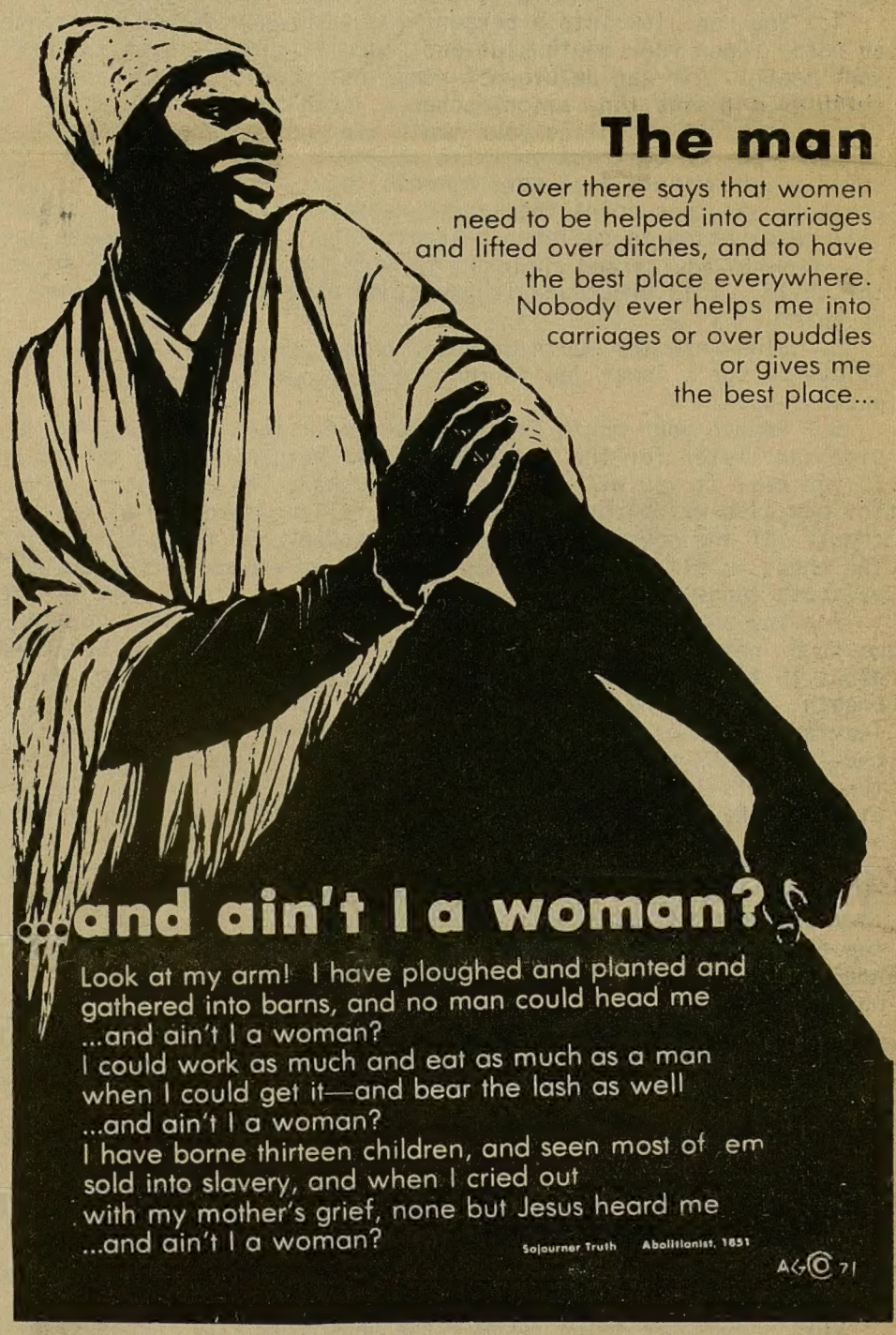
If your group wants to receive bundles of AIN'T I A WOMAN?, you can send 15¢ per copy (minimum bundle: 20 copies) in advance.

We are a collective of nine women functioning as a world wide conspiracy of Radical Lesbians.

Women's History Library, 2325 Oak Street, Berkeley, California 94708. Send stamped return envelope for information. They have lots of neat stuff.

If anyone has any thoughts on the relationship between gayness and class, please send them to us, AIAW.

GAY PRIDE WEEK IN CHICAGO***JUNE 19-27
Lots of events will focus on gay culture, including an Art Fair, picnic, and Gay Parade. To get information and get a place to crash, write Chicago Gay Pride Celebration Committee, 171 West Elm, Chicago, Illinois 60610. Phone 312-644-4708.


The man
over there says that women
need to be helped into carriages
and lifted over ditches, and to have
the best place everywhere.
Nobody ever helps me into
carriages or over puddles
or gives me
the best place...
...and ain't I a woman?
Look at my arm! I have ploughed and planted and
gathered into barns, and no man could head me
...and ain't I a woman?
I could work as much and eat as much as a man
when I could get it—and bear the lash as well
...and ain't I a woman?
I have borne thirteen children, and seen most of em
sold into slavery, and when I cried out
with my mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me
...and ain't I a woman?
Sojourner Truth Abolitionist, 1851
AG©71

This two-color poster costs $3.00 (3 for $7.50) from GREYFALCON HOUSE, 60 Riverside Drive, New York City 10024. Add 50¢ postage and handling for each order to separate addresses.